United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1138
11 May 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General travels to Washington D.C. for meetings with United States President, Secretary of State and other Government officials.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Mohammed Sahnoun, meets with General Aideed, United Nations agencies plan coordinated approach to providing humanitarian assistance.

+ Secretary-General accepts invitation for United Nations to attend second plenary session of Convention for democratic South Africa as observer.

+ President of Azerbaijan appeals to international assistance to end violence in Nagorno-Karabakh; Armenia requests urgent meeting of Security Council to discuss situation in that region.

+ Phase two of Cambodian cease-fire agreement -- demobilization of armed forces under control of United Nations Transitional Authority -- to begin on 13 June.

+ President of Ukraine cites slackening interest of international community in Chernobyl disaster; urges United Nations to continue political, economic, military assistance to his country.

+ United Nations Drug Control programme receives 1992 Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Award.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali leaves New York this evening for Washington D.C, where he will meet tomorrow, Tuesday, 12 May, United States President George Bush and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs James A. Baker.

The Secretary-General will also meet with members of the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committee of Congress. The meeting is

(more)

For information media--not an official record

hosted by Senator Claiborne Pell and Representative Dante Fascell. On Wednesday 13 May, at the invitation of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Mr. Boutros-Ghali will deliver an address on Capitol Hill. He will also visit the United Nations Information Centre in Washington. At noon, the Secretary-General will attend a reception and luncheon at the National Press Club, following which he will address the audience and answer questions. He will depart for New York on Wednesday evening.

Earlier today, the Secretary-General met with Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, who has just returned from his visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mr. Goulding is preparing a report on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Secretary-General, who will submit the final document to the Security Council for consideration later this week.

During his visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mr. Goulding has held talks with Yugoslav leaders on the feasibility of sending a United Nations peace-keeping force to that region.

This afternoon, before leaving for Washington D.C., the Secretary-General hosted a private luncheon for former General Secretary of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev.

* * *

In Somalia, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mohammed Sahnoun, met yesterday with the Chairman of the United Somali Congress, General Aideed, to discuss a wide range of issues relating to the conflict in that country. A United Nations Spokesman said today that those issues included the cessation of hostilities, the question of Somali refugees who have been gathering on the Somali/Kenya border, as well as the possible deployment of United Nations observers and security personnel in Mogadishu. The two have also agreed to continue their consultations on all the issues, the Spokesman said.

On the plight of the refugees, Ambassador Sahnoun expressed concern to correspondents following the meeting, and announced that representatives from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), who had visited the camps, were in the process of arranging relief assistance. The Heads of United Nations Agencies in Somalia are also expected to meet with Ambassador Sahnoun today, in the first of a planned series of regular meetings aimed at developing a coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has accepted an invitation for the United Nations to attend, as an observer, the second plenary session of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA II), which will take place on 15 and 16 May in Johannesburg, South Africa.

(more)

The United Nations participated as an observer in the first meeting of CODESA in December 1991, and supports the negotiating process for a democratic South Africa. In a statement released at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General said the United Nations attaches great importance to CODESA II and urged "all the representatives of the South African people to make a concerted effort at the session in order to establish the foundation for a new constitution for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa".

The United Nations delegation attending the Convention will include Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan, the Indian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, who will lead the delegation; Hisham Omayad, the Director of the Department of Political Affairs; and N. Bwakira, Director for the Regional Bureau for Africa, the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

* * *

Azerbaijan has protested what it called "a concentrated bombing attack" by Armenian forces against the city of Shusha in the province of Nagorno-Karabakh on Saturday, 9 May, resulting in the occupation and destruction of the city with heavy loss of life.

In a statement on Saturday, the President of Azerbaijan, Y. Mamedov, described the attack by "Armenian militarists" as a "barbarian action" and warned that the destruction of the city "would, inevitably, elicit an appropriate response", and that the battle might "develop into a large-scale conflict". Mr. Mamedov appealed to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the President of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and other States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Turkey and Iran, as well as the international community, to assist his country in preventing an escalation of the violence.

The President's statement was transmitted to the President of the Security Council in a letter, dated 10 May, and signed by Permanent Representative to the U.N. of Azerbaijan, Hassan A. Hassanov.

Meanwhile, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian has requested an emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the "escalation of the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh". According to a press communiqué issued by the Armenian Mission today, the request was transmitted to the Council President in a letter, dated 9 May.
(S/23894)

* * *

The Commander of the military component of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, has announced that the most important phase of the peace-keeping operation would begin on 13 June.

(more)

According to a statement issued by the spokesman for UNTAC on Saturday, 9 May, the date signals the beginning of the regroupment and cantonment process in which the armed forces place themselves under UNTAC control in "cantonment areas" to be disarmed and await demobilization. It is anticipated that that process will take about four weeks.

General Sanderson made the announcement after receiving assurances from the commanders of the armed forces of the four factions that the Cambodian Peace agreement would be respected. The Cambodian Peace Agreement was signed in Paris last October and led to the establishment of UNTAC.

Recent reports of cease-fire violations in Kompong Thom province were high on the agenda at the meetings over the weekend, along with other issues associated with setting the Phase Two date. General Sanderson expressed his confidence in the ability of the United Nations in undertaking the many challenges involved in the Cambodian Mission.

* * *

The President of Ukraine, Leonid M. Kravchuk, said today that his country was building "a non-block, nuclear-free and neutral State" which wanted to occupy its proper place in the European and world communities. Speaking to correspondents at Headquarters, Mr. Kravchuk announced that in discussion with the Secretary-General today, they had agreed that the United Nations should establish a mission in the Ukraine to ensure that the country could take an active part in "all the transformations occurring in the United Nations". He also expressed hope that the Organization would continue to provide assistance in political, economic, military spheres, as well as in the destruction of nuclear weapons.

Calling attention to the Chernobyl disaster, Mr. Kravchuk said there had been "some slackening of international attention to Chernobyl" where some 5 million people live and he welcomed the United Nations efforts to mitigate the effects of the accident.

* * *

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has received the 1992 Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Award in recognition of the programme's "positive work" in the fight against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and for the search for peace in this world.

A press release issued in Vienna today said the Award was established in 1984 by the Colombian Government and the Lara Bonilla family to commemorate former Colombian Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, who was shot to death by drug traffickers on 30 April 1984 in Bogota, Colombia. It was accepted on behalf of the Programme by Arturo Hein, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Columbia, at a special ceremony held April 30 in Neiva, the capital city of the Department of Huila.

* *** *